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Too much oversight

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Retiring Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker has made a worthwhile recommendation in calling for the merger of the House and Senate intelligence oversight committees into a single unit, served by a small but highly professional staff selected with an eye to its reliability in keeping the nation's secrets confidential.

In the congressional hysteria that followed Watergate and revelations of CIA wrongdoing, the zeal to regulate the nation's intelligence-gathering services reached the ridiculous point where there were at one point eight congressional committees performing oversight functions. This has more sensibly been reduced back to two, but members and staff alike have been guilty of torrential leaks and other ill-considered yapping.

Congressional oversight is valuable and in the spirit of the Constitution and the American premise, but a tight hold is necessary to keep that oversight as responsible as possible. In terms of national security, less in this regard is certainly more.
